

Head Lice Advice and the LiceMeister™ Comb

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The following information is for parents who have been unsuccessful eliminating head lice from their home. *"Have you been shampooing hair, laundering, vacuuming, bagging everything, spraying pesticide in the house, using mayonnaise, tea tree oil and other home remedies?" **Stop!***

- **Spend your energy nit picking.** Since we are only dealing with head lice and not body lice, laundering every piece of clothing in the house is not necessary. **DO** launder bed linens and pajamas and wash clothes that the person is wearing the day of treatment.
- **Lice normally cannot survive more than 24 hours off of our heads.** They need warmth (our body heat) and food (our blood). Without us they die. They will not leave us unless they detect another person's head and hair nearby. Lice, with claws for feet, are not well adapted to walking on surfaces except hair. Lice prefer to follow hair like a train will follow a track.
- **Vacuum mattresses and sofas.** A live nit attached to a hair that falls off the head can survive more than 24 hours. However, it will not hatch without adequate warmth (approximately 90°F). The newly hatched louse also must have food and it may not find any on a sofa or carpet unless you happen to be there when it hatches.
- **Nits.** A newly laid nit looks dark gray. They are attached to hair close to the scalp. As the hair grows it moves the nit further from the scalp. Empty nits are white in appearance. Nits containing a developing louse or a dead one look light brown or tan-colored.
- **Nit Removal** is the key to successful elimination of head lice. The best comb for louse and nit removal is the LiceMeister™ comb or equal. The comb has 1.5 inch-long stainless steel teeth with precision spacing. Health Department personnel and parents who have used the comb know it is the most effective and efficient mechanical device for removing nits.
 - If you have already used a louse shampoo in the past week, shampoo the hair with regular shampoo and use the LiceMeister™ or equal to remove any nits and live lice. Section off the hair before starting the combing.
 - Lice of all ages/sizes are removed by the LiceMeister™. **Dip the comb in hot tap water** (over 130°) after each pass through the hair. **DO NOT BOIL THE COMB! Boiling will distort the plastic.** The hot water will kill the live lice and nits. Keep the same side of the comb facing the scalp so lice will not be put back onto the next hair section combed.
 - The use of the LiceMeister™ comb or equal eliminates the need to use other chemical treatment. Regular use of the LiceMeister™ can remove lice and nits before a big problem arises.
- The LiceMeister™ is available from the National Pediculosis Association, P.O. Box 610189, Newton, MA 02161. The Internet address is www.headlice.org for a picture of the comb. Local drug stores also carry a similar comb.